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Research Article

Amomum bungoensis: A New Species of *Amomum* (Zingiberaceae) from Sarawak, Malaysia

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A new species of *Amomum* Roxb. from Sarawak is described. *Amomum bungoensis* S. Aimi Syazana & Meekiong, sp. nov., shows similarity with *A. durum* S. Sakai and Nagamasu by having similar fruit characteristics but differs in labellum and anther crest of the flowers. Detailed description and photographs are provided.

1. Introduction

The gingers are widely distributed in the tropic and pantropic countries throughout the World, where they are thriving almost in all habitats. Up to date, 53 genera and more than 1377 species have been recorded since 1800s [1, 2]. Genus *Amomum* is the second largest genus after *Alpinia* Roxb. which it consists of 150-180 species throughout Southeast Asia [3]. Locally known as *"Kapulaga"* or *"Buah Pelaga"*, *Amomum* is the most valuable and expensive spices after Saffron and Vanilla in the world. This genus is well-known in Indian cuisine (as a flavoring agent) and also for medicinal values ever since ancient times. Sarawak, Malaysia, is very rich with gingers species.

Holttum [4], in his revision of gingers of Peninsular Malaysia, stated that *Amomum* has very own unique characteristics. It has elongating pseudostem and inflorescence, absence of involucre sterile bracts, and broad yellow and white labellum with small red markings (the most common characteristic). The anther crest is usually distinctly trilobed. *Amomum's* fruit can be categorized into two groups: capsulate and fleshy spiny berry. The very last revision on genus *Amomum* in Sarawak was by Sakai and Nagamasu [5] where they focused on *Amomum* species in Lambir Hills National Park (LHNP). They encounter twelve species with five new species that include *A. durum* [5]. According to Lamb et al. [6], about 31 species of *Amomum* have been recorded and given names. But, up till now, no taxonomic revision has been made in Sarawak.

Recent explorations at Bungo Range National Park have made an addition to Sarawak *Amomum* species. During the identification process, the specimen has similar outstanding fruit characteristics with *A. durum*. However, after detailed examination on the specimens, we found that it differs from *A. durum*. Detailed descriptions on this novel species are described herein (Figure 1).

2. Materials and Methods

The study site was in Bungo Range National Park, Bau Division, Sarawak, Malaysia. Samples collected were examined and morphological studies were conducted in the Herbarium of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (HUMS) and laboratory of Faculty of Resource Science and Technology, UNIMAS. The characteristics of stigma, stamen, ovary, and any specific features were examined using USB Digital microscope (500x). Herbarium samples collection was prepared following the standard protocols as suggested by Bridson and Forman [7]. Herbarium specimens were deposited in Herbarium of Forest Department Sarawak (SAR) and Herbarium of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (HUMS).